



STATE OF IDAHO

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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NEWS RELEASE

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GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR REMOVAL OF EURASIAN WATERMILFOIL FROM IDAHO WATERWAYS

(BOISE) The Idaho State Department of Agriculture announced today that it is accepting applications to receive a portion of \$4 million in grant funding aimed at eradicating Eurasian watermilfoil from Idaho's lakes and rivers.

The deadline for applications is May 15. Applications are available at <http://www.idahoag.us>.

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne and the Legislature recently approved House Bill 869 containing the two-year \$4 million grant program.

Eurasian watermilfoil is an aggressive noxious weed that quickly roots itself in Idaho's lakes and rivers, spoiling the state's scenery, impairing wildlife and fish habitat and posing a danger to swimmers. The weed has the potential to form large blooms, eventually turning into ugly brown mats that sit on the water's surface. The blooms can easily entangle swimmers and boat props. The blooms are harmful to fish habitat, as they can starve the water of much-needed oxygen. Once disturbed and broken apart, the weed can quickly re-root and start a new infestation.

Milfoil has already infested more than 4,000 acres of Idaho's waterways. The weed continues to spread, and lakes and rivers throughout Idaho that still have no milfoil present are considered susceptible to the weed.

"The Governor and the Legislature made it clear they want to get a handle on this problem immediately, and have instructed us to begin aggressively working to eradicate this noxious weed," said Idaho State Department of Agriculture Director Pat Takasugi.

"The grant program is a significant step towards the elimination of Eurasian watermilfoil," said Roger Batt Idaho Weed Awareness Campaign. "The other significant component will come from Idahoans, who will need to be vigilant if we are to prevent Eurasian watermilfoil from infesting new lakes and rivers. During the coming months, we will be active in reminding Idahoans to check their boats, watercraft, trailers and bilge water for this noxious weed, so that we don't inadvertently carry milfoil from one lake to another."

"It takes only postage-stamp fragment of Eurasian watermilfoil to re-root and start a new infestation," said ISDA Noxious Weed Bureau Chief Matt Voile. "That is why we plan to begin our eradication program without delay."

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